

## PUSH UP, PULL DOWN

The overhead passing movement pattern in this exercise is good for balance—reaching up directly overhead has a way of making a person feel very centered over their base of support. Passing the balloon overhead makes the movement between arms a reciprocal motion that is good for sequential coordination. It feels good and helps build core stability safely.

### ***Benefits »***

- ⦿ Enhances tall posture; facilitates length with strength.
- ⦿ Strengthens all core muscles, including the back extensors and abdominals.
- ⦿ Improves range of motion for the shoulders and scapulae.

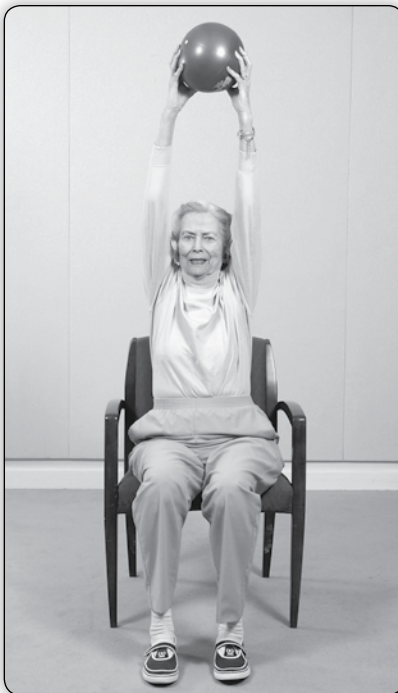
### ***Set It Up »***

Have balloons or Slo Mo balls ready, one per person. Make sure they are a little soft; this makes them much easier to grasp. One variation uses light hand weights.

### ***How to Do It »***

#### **The Start**

- ⦿ Participants sit tall at the edge of the chair, with shoulders over hips, abdominals in, and head pulled back in line with shoulders.
- ⦿ They hold a balloon in the right hand and place it on the right shoulder.
- ⦿ They inhale to prepare.



## **The Moves**

Use the following cues.

- ⊙ Exhale slowly and push the balloon up to a center point directly above the head.
- ⊙ Use the arms, shoulders, and ribs to lift the balloon (Venus de Milo style arms, see page 63).
- ⊙ Inhale and stay tall with the abdominals pulled in.
- ⊙ At the top, reach up with the left hand to grasp the balloon.
- ⊙ Pass the balloon to the left hand.
- ⊙ Exhale and use the left hand to pull the balloon down toward the left shoulder.
- ⊙ Repeat overhead passing for 8 to 10 passes, progressing to 20, as tolerated.

## **Take It Further »**

- ⊙ Increase the number of repetitions.
- ⊙ Add a second set later in the class.
- ⊙ Use very light weights, just 1 to 2 pounds (.5-1 kilogram).

## **Give It More Balance »**

- ⊙ Sit with tandem feet, heels lifted.
- ⊙ Advanced: Perform while standing in front of a chair or with a walker.

## **Keep It Safe »**

Many participants have rounded backs. If a participant cannot comfortably reach overhead, suggest they pass the balloon horizontally at chest level. Frequently cue them to keep their abdominals in to better support their back whenever their arms are overhead. This will increase their core stability.

If standing, be extra cautious. Overhead reaching while standing is a fall risk. Instruct participants to stand with feet shoulder-width apart or slightly wider, and have them place one leg in contact with their chair. Nothing should hurt.

## **Live It »**

Reaching up and pulling down with the right arm and then the left becomes a gentle, undulating motion to improve thoracic range of motion and comfort.